



# SCOTT WALKER

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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For Immediate Release

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## **Developing Our Workforce: DWD Seeks Applications for Wisconsin Fast Forward Grants**

**Wausau** – Governor Scott Walker and Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Reggie Newson announced today that the Department will begin accepting applications for Wisconsin Fast Forward grants.

"Workers need to have access to the most up-to-date employment information," Governor Walker said. "By providing quality worker training and cutting-edge labor market information, our workers will be best quipped to re-enter the workforce in places where opportunities are available."

"Wisconsin Fast Forward grants will support innovative training that is demand-driven by employers and geared to equipping Wisconsin workers with the skills they need to fill family-supporting jobs and reach true independence," DWD Secretary Reggie Newson said. "With smart training investments that supply businesses with the skilled workers they need to fill good-paying jobs, Wisconsin's already strong economy will continue to grow."

The Office of Skills Development (OSD) is responsible for approving the Wisconsin Fast Forward grants. Prior to this grant application announcement, OSD identified three industry sectors, which have immediate worker needs. These industries include manufacturing and small manufacturing businesses with 50 or fewer employees, construction, and customer service representatives. Grants will be awarded to businesses within each of these industries to provide training for the unemployed or underemployed.

Wisconsin Fast Forward is designed to connect workers with training and real-time job availability. OSD will track and report the numbers of unemployed and underemployed who gain employment, the number of workers who receive higher wages due to additional training, and compare the wages that employees receive before and after their training to determine the success of various grants.

Manufacturing is a rapidly growing industry in Wisconsin. Nearly 17 percent of Wisconsin's workforce is employed in manufacturing, compared to the national average of 9 percent. The durable goods manufacturing sector is expected to see the most growth through 2020 and there is a need to fill these and other positions to remain at the forefront of the industry. The forecast for construction jobs is nearly as bright. Building permits increased 10.6 percent in 2012, and approximately 45 percent of 26,000 job openings are newly created. Furthermore, there are 5,500 current customer service/sales related job openings and growth is predicted to expand by 15 percent through 2020.

[Skill Explorer](#) is another tool that was recently launched for job seekers. Individuals can search for job openings based on current job title, the training they already have, or by location.

[Click here](#) for more information regarding the Wisconsin Fast Forward grants and to learn how to apply for a grant.

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